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INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE  
RHMFISS/CJTJF HOA

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 001383

DEPT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, SE WILLIAMSON, AF/SPG  
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND HUDSON  
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN  
ADDIS ABABA ALSO FOR USAU

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [EFIN](#) [MOPS](#) [KPKO](#) [AU](#) [UNSC](#) [SU](#)  
SUBJECT: PARADOXICAL DARFUR COMPENSATION CHAIRMAN WILL RETURN TO THE  
FIGHT DESPITE PROGRESS IN HIS COMMITTEE

REF: KHARTOUM 1276

KHARTOUM 00001383 001.2 OF 002

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: In a September 4 meeting with poloffs, TDRA Compensation Committee Chairman Abulgasim Ahmed Abulgasim said that the many Darfur initiatives and proposals (including his own plan recently rejected by the NCP,) are unable to fundamentally change Darfur (reftel). In a remarkable turnaround from his last meeting with poloff, he argued that a military solution is the only option for Darfur's oppressed citizens, predicting that a second attack by a unified rebel front would succeed in overthrowing the government. Despite these forthright statements, the paradoxical Abulgasim stated that he has been pleased with progress in his compensation committee. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) Abulgasim stated that despite an initially positive response to his Darfur initiative (reftel) by senior NCP officials such as Vice President Ali Osman Taha and HAC State Minister for Humanitarian Affairs (and ICC indictee) Ahmed Haroun, the NCP "took our plan and threw it in the garbage." (Note: A translation of the plan has been sent to AF/SPG and the office of the SE. End Note.) Abulgasim noted that the Government is not serious about finding a political solution to Darfur. He then quickly turned to the military options of the rebels.

¶3. (SBU) Abulgasim stated that SAF forces operating in Darfur were severely weakened by the recent fighting, in part because their tactical decisions were made based on erroneous information emanating from a flawed military intelligence apparatus. He stated that NISS agents are afraid to leave the cities of El Fasher, El Geneina and Nyala, and rely instead on various informants who distort information to suit their own tribal and personal agendas. "The information they receive is very limited, and fifty percent of it is wrong," he asserted. He also accused Minister of Defense, and Bashir crony, Abdelrahim Mohammed Hussein of incompetence. "He was a classmate of mine, and let me tell you, he is stupid," he said.

¶4. (SBU) Abulgasim continued that the rebel movements were coming together and would fight until taking control of lands encompassed within Darfur's 1916 borders. "Once we've liberated those lands, we will negotiate with the central government," he said. "If they refuse, we'll continue on to the 1885 borders" (which included much of Kordofan). He also predicted a second attack by JEM, possibly allied with SLM, after the rainy season. He stated that this attack would take place sometime between October and December, citing his colleagues in the field. "Don't stay in Khartoum," he jokingly told poloffs, asserting that this time, JEM would succeed.

¶5. (SBU) Despite labeling the Darfur Peace Agreement as "completely dead," Abulgasim stated that his own compensation committee is making significant progress. Abulgasim said the World

Bank and international consulting firms have been invaluable to the committee's work. He stated that he expects the committee to publish a major report in October. Identifying and recording victims entitled to compensation, establishing a scheme of collective compensation incorporating microfinance programs, and establishing the organizational infrastructure needed for this work are all priorities for the commission according to AbulGasim. (Abulgasim promised to deliver a draft plan to poloffs as soon as it becomes available.) When asked about the conflict between his pessimism regarding the peace process and optimism with respect to his own committee, Abulgasim responded, "We are doing what we can to establish the mechanisms needed for compensation, and even if I go back to the fight, that system will still be in place," noted Abulgasim.

#### COMMENT

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¶6. (SBU) Abulgasim was in good humor despite the NCP's rejection of his Darfur plan, his gloomy outlook on the peace process, and his prediction of renewed war following the rainy season. Although appearing somewhat schizophrenic, Abulgasim's contradictory remarks and demeanor are not unlike many Sudanese interlocutors and seasoned observers (or Embassy Khartoum, for that matter). Many former rebels like Abulgasim confidently proceed in their work, despite internal and external pressures, the country's extreme volatility and bleak prospects for immediate peace, and longstanding competing interests. We will continue to watch Abulgasim closely in the coming months. End comment.

#### BIO NOTE

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¶7. (SBU) Abulgasim told poloffs that his father was a Member of Parliament in the 1950s and his mother was daughter of a Darfur Sultan. A civil engineer by trade, he lived and worked for many years in Saudi Arabia as a consultant before returning to Darfur in

KHARTOUM 00001383 002.2 OF 002

2003 to join the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM). He stated that he helped procure financing for rebel activities. Upon the disintegration of the SLM he sided with Abdul Wahid's faction, but changed sides during the 2006 peace negotiations in Abuja to become affiliated with the loose grouping of field commanders known as the G-19. Soon after, he said, he returned to Saudi Arabia but was drawn back into the fold to work on unification of the rebel factions.

¶8. (SBU) Abulgasim told poloffs that while in Saudi Arabia, he participated in a panel discussion organized by the Sudanese Consulate in Jeddah where he clashed with Sudanese officials by expressing support for UNSC Resolution 1706 to deploy peacekeeping troops in Darfur. Following this incident he was "kidnapped" by Saudi security forces and forcibly returned to Sudan, where he was jailed from September 28, 2006 to March 29, 2007. Upon his release, Abulgasim stated he received personal apologies from Vice President Ali Osman Taha and NISS Chief Salah Ghosh. He noted that Ghosh even intervened with Saudi authorities after they denied him a visa.

¶9. (SBU) Abulgasim stated that soon after his release he was appointed by President Bashir to head up the Transitional Darfur Regional Authority's (TDRA) Compensation Commission, albeit without his prior knowledge or consent. "I heard about my appointment on television," he quipped, noting that he refused to accept it. Instead, he traveled to Arusha, Tanzania for rebel unification talks. It was there that other rebel leaders "forced" Abulgasim to accept the role of TDRA Compensation Commissioner. "They thought I'd do a good job," he said.

FERNANDEZ